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HAIL TO THE LEAP-YEAR GIRL

HOW THE KING WON
Ellen of the Golden
Locks—A Story of
The First Leap Year and
What Happened in the
Court

BUT first you must understand that it was the good Saint Patrick who made the Leap Year, for in the before time, as it is written in the chronicles, "maids might sigh and make great dole out of measure for that they could not tell to the man they loved what was in their hearts till he had spoken of the love that was in his heart."

Now this is the story of how the King found Queen Ellen:

In a land which is all an island there was once a King who had reigned three years, and the time came when it was necessary for him to take a wife. But the King was a warlike King, and gave no thought to love. Upon a day came his ministers, and said that there must be a Queen to sit beside him on his throne.

Now a stranger had come into the court of the King bearing news that the next year was to be a year when maids might tell the one they loved that they desired him for husband, and when the King heard this he called again his ministers together, saying: "I have not time for love, but in this new year let all the maids of my kingdom come before me, and let each say which man she loves. Then, by my faith, if one choose me, then shall she be Queen."

Thereupon the King laughed in his beard, for he believed that in all the land there was not one would choose to be the consort of the man whose wickedness was so great that the fame of it had spread over all the world.

Thus it fell: On the first day, then, of the new year all the maids of the kingdom came before the King, and he bade them choose the man they would love forever and ever. Now he had not told them of his plan for that they might be feared to say that they loved the King. Then he lay aside his crown and came down from his throne and stood among his courtiers.

The names of the maids were called as they fell from the scroll. The first maid chose Basil the courtier, and Basil was very happy, for that he had not dared to tell his love to her. The next chose Eadfrid, the captain of the chief ship, but Eadfrid, the captain, kissed her and gave her a silk gown, saying: "I am bespoken," which was true, for he had married a maid of France in the last voyage to that coast. The next maid chose William of the Black Beard, and they two went a little apart from the others that they might watch what befel.

Then other maids chose—sometimes winning their lover, sometimes winning only the kiss and the silk gown, as it was decreed in the law. Presently it came about that all the maids had chosen—all save one, who was called Ellen of the Golden Locks.

So when he saw that Ellen of the Golden Locks had not told which of all men she desired he became possessed of a great love for her, for he remembered that long before his father, the Great King, had died, and while he himself was yet a Prince, learning the trade of war—he remembered that in those days he had known the little maid and had loved her then. Then he remembered, too, how the wars came, and how all the years he had been fighting the enemies of his country, and how he had forgotten Ellen of the Golden Locks.

Then the name of Ellen of the Golden Locks was called from the scroll. Thus she spoke:

"In the whole land there is but one whom I desire most. But I fear to speak of him lest he refuse me. I do not want silk gowns, but for the kiss—even then would I be happy with that, for I love—him—better—than—anything—in—all—the—world."

"His name!" cried the King.

"I dare not speak it aloud," said Ellen of the Golden Locks.

"Then tell it to me privately."

Thereupon Ellen approached and whispered one word in the King's ear.

And then the King kissed her, there before all the maids and all the courtiers. Then he led her to his throne and made her be seated there and placed his crown upon her head.

So it came about that the people knew there was a Queen to rule with their King, and there was great rejoicing through all the country, over which they ruled happily ever after.

"But why," asked the King upon a day, "hadst thou not told me of thy love before?"

"Because there were no leap years then," said the Queen.

Through all the seasons of
years gone by
I've watched the maids
with their lovers go
To the altar rail with their
rings, but I
Am wandering aimlessly to and fro;
Ever afraid that a dreaded "No"
Might come from the lips of my Marjorie.
"Faint heart ne'er won," says the poet, so
Leap Year time is the time for me.

Loud and long was my lover's sigh,
She might have heard, and she ought to know
How much I love her, but when I try
To tell my secret, my blood runs slow,
My heart beats fast and the words won't go
As I want them to; and she cannot see
What I'm trying to make my confession show—
But Leap Year time is the time for me.

For then is the time that the
maid lays by
The laws that exist between
belle and beau.
Her lips are loosed, and her
heart may try

To find its mate which has loved her so.
Then is the time that I'll choose to go
And sit by the fire with my Marjorie.
She'll find out then all my cause of woe—
Leap Year is the time for me.

ENVOY.

Hail! My girl! Who cares for snow
When I hear the confession of Marjorie?
Who cares how fiercely the winds may blow?—
Leap Year is the time for me.

HARRY P. TABER.

WHAT MAY HAPPEN
If the Navy
Custom of Retirement
Is Foil in the Case
of Captain Chadwick—Some
Leap Year Stories

ACCORDING to the established custom of the Navy Department of the United States, the officers are retired from active duty on their sixty-fourth birthday.

Captain French E. Chadwick, who commanded the New York during the Spanish-American War, and who is now head of the Naval War College at Newport, stands well along toward the front of the list of captains, and it is quite possible that he will be made a Rear Admiral within a few years. On February 29, 1896, he celebrated his thirteenth birthday. On February 29, 1904, he will celebrate his fourteenth, and some time between the last day of February, 1908, and the first day of March of the same year he will be retired from active duty in the Navy.

If Captain Chadwick construes the law, figuring by the number of birthdays he has had, he cannot be retired till February 29, 2108, for upon that date his sixty-fourth birthday will be celebrated, and by all the laws of the department that should be the date of his retirement.

But Captain Chadwick must remember a mistake made by Rossini, the famous composer, who, on February 29, 1864, sent out invitations to what he called his eighteenth birthday party. He was born on February 29, 1792. In making out his invitations, however, he had forgotten that the year 1800 was not a leap year, and that the party, therefore, was the celebration of his seventeenth birthday. This, too, in the case of Captain Chadwick, who, if he is retired on his sixty-fourth birthday, must remember that the year 2000, being divisible by 400, will be a leap year, while 2100 will not have that distinction.

The year 1904 is the first leap year in eight years. This is accounted for by the rules which were laid down by Pope Gregory VIII, who reformed the calendar in 1582. It was decreed that the years whose numerical sign was divisible by 4 should be leap years, except those years which were not divisible by 400. Thus the year 1600 was a leap year, and the 2000 will be, but 1700, 1800 and 1900 were not years in which the extra day was added to the month of February.

By this plan the makers of the Gregorian calendar corrected the errors between the true year and the established division of the time as was current in that day. By the arrangement of Pope Gregory, it was found that there was a loss of a slight amount of time, even when an extra day was added every four years. It was decided, therefore, that a day must be dropped once in every 400 years, and the present calculation of the calendar provides for this, in that the years whose number is divisible by 400 shall be leap years, and the loss of time made up.

Still, the scientists discovered that there is a gain of 36 seconds in the accepted calendar year over the true or astronomical year. In 3323 years this time, if it is allowed to accumulate, will amount to 365 days. Pope Gregory and his advisors, therefore, decided that while the year 4000 is divisible by 400, it shall still be considered as a common year, and that the extra day shall not be added to the month of February, as would ordinarily be the case.

The scientists have proved, too, that one in every 1,500 births occurs upon the 29th of February. Not only have several celebrities been accounted among those whose birthdays come every four years, but there are some events in history which have happened upon this day.

Long before Paul Jones made the beginnings of the United States Navy, the first settlers in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, who had made their homes at Deerfield, were attacked by the primitive navy of the Indians. On February 29, 1704, they stole up the river in boats. The warriors attacked the people, slew many of them, took 300 captives and burned the dwellings.

On February 29, 1804, the United States ship "Peacemaker" was blown up. The Secretary of the Navy, Admiral Upshur, was killed, and a large number of sailors died from the effects of the explosion.

On February 29, 1826, occurred the battle of Witalahoochee River, in which the settlers of Florida were attacked by the Indians, who came up the stream in boats.

Curiously, the date which has the most to do with leap year has been closely allied to the stories which have had much to do in the making of the history of the Navy—at least it has had much to do with stories concerning the use of boats in warfare.